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Senate

IN RECOGNITION OF REVEREND GLORIA L. CHERRY'S RETIREMENT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of the Reverend Gloria L. Cherry upon her retirement. Pastor Cherry has served the state of Delaware for countless years and her leadership over that span of time has won her the respect and gratitude of our entire state. She has been, and remains, a trusted friend.

Pastor Cherry was born in New Church, VA, on July 3, 1935, to the late Marvin and Bertha Trader. She came to Delaware at a young age and attended Phillip C. Showell Elementary in Selbyville, DE, and received her high school education from Howard High in Wilmington, DE.

Pastor Cherry is the wife of the late Christopher H. Cherry. The two met and were married in Delaware on May 1, 1976. Gloria is the proud and beloved mother of five children, Larry Robinson, Garry Robinson, Addie Merchant, Bertha Hardman and Lorri Jamison; eight grandchildren, Ryan, Rodney and David Robinson, Willie Hardman, III, Christopher and Bobbie Merchant and Winston, Shavon and Dionna Jamison and one great grandson, Ryan Robinson, Jr.

Pastor Cherry was ordained in Spain in 1978 where she received her calling from God. She studied under Pastor Eliah Holland and became a licensed minister in 1980. In

1983, she founded the First United Church of Gospel Ministries which in 2004 was renamed the Healing Wings Christian Center.

Pastor Cherry's service has extended far beyond the church and well into the community. Through the First United Church of Gospel Ministries, she, along with a group of concerned citizens met to discuss the challenges facing young people such as teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and discipline issues. As a result, the Because We Care, Inc. community-based organization was formed. Through a grant from the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Pastor Cherry founded the Because We Care Alternative Middle School in Dover, DE. The Because We Care Alternative Middle School is a nonprofit agency that provides continuing education to Kent County middle school children who have been expelled or are on the verge of expulsion. The Because We Care Alternative Middle School serves the five school districts located within Kent County, DE. The program focuses on learning skills, life skills, social competencies and substance abuse/resistance training. Her successes with young people are hailed by Superintendents, Principals and parents alike.

By soliciting volunteers to act as caseworkers, mentors and activity aides, the

youth are exposed to one-on-one relationships that routinely develop into long-time friendships. Pastor Cherry's philosophy is that children do not have discipline problems; they have 'love' problems. Too many of them live in homes bereft of love. Pastor Cherry believes that providing a stable learning atmosphere along with the love that every child needs, children can make the turn to a more positive life with their families.

In 1999, Pastor Cherry envisioned a homeless shelter for youths as a means of respite for parents and guardians who are struggling with employment and housing for their families. Through additional grants, donations, and blood, sweat and tears, her vision came to fruition through the building and leasing of 'Glory Hall.' Glory Hall is a dormitory style living facility that houses 18 youths. The Hall is equipped with a classroom, full-service kitchen and cafeteria, activity area and bedrooms--all built through Pastor Cherry's devotion and love for young people. This year, Glory Hall has been leased to an organization called South West Keys, a Texas based organization with agencies throughout the United States. This organization provides shelter for immigrant children until they are reunited with family members here in the United States.

Through Reverend Cherry's tireless efforts, she has made a profound difference in the lives of thousands of Delawareans. Upon her retirement, she will leave behind a legacy of commitment to public service for both her children and grandchildren and for the rest of us to follow. I thank her for the friendship that we share and for the inspiration that she provides through a lifetime of caring. Although Pastor Cherry is ending this particular chapter of her life, she will open the next chapter by continuing to crusade for those of us less fortunate. On

behalf of all Delawareans, I congratulate her on a truly remarkable and distinguished career and extend to her my very best wishes for every success in the future. I wish her and her family only the very best in all that lies ahead for each of them.